

# REASONS humbly offer'd to the Consideration of the Honourable House of Commons.

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311

*Shewing the great Necessity of having a Bill for the Regulating of Printing  
and Printing-Presses.*

**I**T is humbly conceived, That without such a Bill, neither the Government in CHURCH or STATE, nor PROPERTY, can well be secured.

As to the GOVERNMENT, how often that hath been assaulted by the virulent Strokes of Bold and Licentious Pens, it is too notorious to need to be instanc'd in by particular Enumerations: Libels have been impudently thrown out almost from every Quarter, since the Determination of the Statute of 13 and 14 Car. 2. c. 12, which was thought in a great measure so necessary for preserving the Publick Peace, (and with it every Man's Private Interest in Copies of Books, &c.) that \* Parliaments have judg'd it reasonable to continue and revive it no less than Five times, and that in three King's Reigns.

\* This Act was to continue two years from June 10.

1662. Continued 16 Car. 2. c. 8. to the end of the next Session of Parliament. Continued 16 and 17 Car. 2. c. 7. to the end of the next Session of Parliament. Continued 17 Car. 2. c. 4. to the end of the first Session of the next Parliament. Revived and Continued, 1 Jac. 2. c. 17. from June 24. 1685. for Seven Years, and from thence to the end of the next Session of Parliament. Continued, 4 and 5 W. and M. c. 24. from Feb. 13. 1692. to the end of the next Session of Parliament.

But now, we rejoyce that leave hath been given for the bringing in another Bill, which it is hop'd, from your Great Wisdoms, will prove an effectual Barrier to stop the daring Inroads of Insolent and Treasonable Pamphlets, sent abroad by Persons that cannot be contented with their own Ease, and undisturbed Enjoyments of both their Religious and Civil Interests, but from their Restless and Malevolent Tempers, are continually Defaming and Reviling His most Excellent Majesty, and those Worthy Patriots that have all-along given Proofs of their Steady and Indefatigable Zeal for the true Service of their Country: Witness the late Wicked and Scandalous Libel, Entitled, *An Account of the Proceedings in the House of Commons, in Relation to the Re-coining of the Clipp'd Money, and falling the Price of Guineas, &c.* A Libel so Spiteful and Venomous in its Tendency and Design, that its chief Aim seems levell'd at Exposing the King Himself to Reproach and Obloquy, and many Members of This Honourable House, to the Rage and Fury of the Rabble, that are too often carried away by Popular Fallacies, for want of being able rightly to discern where the Snake in the Grass lies.

But we shall not presume to say more of it, You having past so just a Censure of the Pamphlet's being *False, Scandalous, and Seditious, and Destructive of the Freedom and Liberties of Parliament*, and accordingly Ordered it to be *Burnt by the Hands of the Common Hangman*.

As to the CHURCH, what Wounds she hath receiv'd, and is still like to receive from the \* Prophane and Blasphemous Affronts of Atheists, Libertines, and Deists, is so \* Of this I am sure, That God Almighty rather than be alone, created the Devil, Letters published by openly manifest, That there is no need of recurring further than to the Books Printed since the Expiration of the Act; wherein it is beyond Contradiction evident, That the Black Design is not levell'd at the Church of *England* in Particular, but indeed at Religion in General; and whether this may not be One way calculated to introduce Popery, deserves a very Serious Consideration.

Mr. Dennis, last Leaf unpag'd.  
and Glory, for ever and ever.

I'll leave out of my Prayers, *Libera nos à malo*.— For thine is my Kingdom, Power, and Glory.  
Rocheſter. Familiar Letters, page 29, 30. Both Printed in 1696.

And as to PROPERTY, the Owners of Copies have been grievously damnified by the Invasions made upon them since That time; and how much further, if not prevented, they are like to suffer, (though they purchas'd their said Copies for them and their Assigns, under the Sanction of a Law) is very hard to Determine, or indeed to Conceive.

It hath been urg'd, That the Bookseller hath the same Remedy against the Invader of his Property, that other Subjects have. But this, if duly consider'd, carries no solid weight with it; for those that will Invade their Rights, may wage Law with them out of the Profits of their Own Books so Pyrated upon them; and though they should lose the Cause, yet may be considerable Gainers by the Bargain, whilst in the mean time the Proprietor may be ruin'd; it being no easy matter for him to prove out of a stol'n Impression of a Thousand Books, (or perhaps more, especially if dispers'd in the Country by Haberdashers, &c.) that One hundred of them have been sold; and besides, if this should happen to be prov'd, yet even Then they cannot expect suitable Costs and Damages.

Therefore it is humbly propos'd, That whosoever shall Print the Property of any other, may forfeit for every Book

And that whosoever shall buy such Book

or Books to sell again, may likewise forfeit for every Book

And that

whosoever shall use any other man's Name or Mark, without Consent first had and obtain'd,

tain'd, may forfeit

the one Moiety to His Majesty, and the other to the Informer; or otherwise, as to your Great Wifdoms shall be thought fit.

And unless such a Property be preserv'd, the Bookseller may not only be ruin'd, but few Books will be Printed well and handsomely, with a fair Letter, and on good Paper; every one endeavouring to Print for his own private Lucre, never regarding the Credit of the Author, or Value of the Book, how Learn'd or Excellent soever, provided his own Narrow Ends be serv'd.

Now to remedy all these Evils, it is humbly offer'd, That the Trade of Printing be Limited to a certain Number (as also that of *Letter-Founders*), that so no more than what are at present may be permitted to set up, until by Death, or otherwise, they happen to fall within That Number; according to the Provision of preceding Parliaments.

But against this there may seem a plausible Objection, which, if answer'd, it is hop'd will clear the whole.

*Objection.*

The Objection is, That it is very hard that a man should be debarr'd the Liberty of Setting up that Trade to which he has serv'd an Apprentice Seven Years; That this is to make men miserable, by keeping them in a state of Servitude: Whereas had they the Privilege that all other Traders have, they might be able to advance their Fortunes in the World, as well as other People.

*Solution.*

In answer to which it may be consider'd, That the whole Bookselling Trade of *England* cannot maintain above Thirty Printing-houses in *London*: And the Fact stands thus, That in the Year 1676. there were but Thirty of 'em in *London*; and even then, tho it was but Ten years from the great Consumption of Books, occasion'd by the Deplorable Fire of *London*, yet only Sixteen of those drove any considerable Trade, so as to be able to maintain their Families; and now the Trade is multipli'd to Sixty, or thereabouts; whereas there is not half the Employment that was Then.

And what can be expected as the Consequence of this, but that both the *Government* in *Church* and *State*, and *Property*, must suffer by it? For these Supernumerary Printers Subsistence must be (if at all) by Printing Libels and Scandalous Pamphlets. Now a Restriction in this respect would be so far from making these men miserable, that it would keep them from being so. And we doubt not but we could get the Hands of the Major part of the Workmen-Printers, for a Limitation, they rather chusing a comfortable Subsistence, as Journey-men, than to run the hazard of setting up That Trade which is very Chargeable; and when they have so done, they must fall into the sad necessity of either Libelling, or Invading Property, or else must subject themselves to Beggary and Starving.

13 and 14.  
Car. 2. Sect. 9.

Moreover, Printing being become an *Art or Manufacture of this Kingdom*, It is humbly offer'd, That no *English* Book, nor any Book (the greatest part whereof is *English*) be Imported, or brought from any Parts beyond the Seas into this Realm, under the Penalty of

Nor any other Book, wherein any of His Majesty's Subjects have a Property, be Imported under the Penalty of And that No Book whatsoever be imported, save in the Port of *London*, without License first had of to whom a Catalogue of such Books shall be presented: And all Bales of Books to be examin'd by a proper Person appointed for that End, (at the Custom-house) before they be deliver'd, under the Penalty of

All Books to be Licens'd and Entred in the Register of the Company of Stationers, and to have the Bookseller or Printer's Name; and no Translation of any Book, nor any Book Printed beyond Sea, to be enter'd, until a Perfect Copy of the same Book or Books be produc'd to the Licencer, and then the Entry to be under the Hand of one of the Wardens of the said Company.

25. H. 8. c.  
15.

And for as much as many of His Majesty's Subjects are *Binders* of Books, and have no other Faculty wherewith to get their Living; It is humbly desir'd, That no Bound Books be Imported, unless they have been Printed Seven years before such their Importation, to prevent the Book-binders utter undoing, by being destitute of Work, under the Penalty of

It is humbly also offer'd, That there may be no Printing but in *London*, the Two Universities, and *York*; the Printing in *London* to be subject to such Regulations as the Act shall appoint; which the or shall have power to cause and compel to be observ'd and kept; or Master and Wardens of the Company of Stationers for the time being; the Vice-Chancellor of each University to have the like Power over the Printers there; and the over that Printing-house of *York*: And that such Person or Persons, as may be thought convenient, may be authoriz'd, with a Constable, to enter into the Houses of Printers, Booksellers, Book-binders, and Publishers of Books, and there search and seize all Books, and parts of Books contrary to such Act, and carry them before

And all Printers, Booksellers, Book-binders, and Publishers of Books, who shall oppose such Entrance as aforesaid, to be liable to Punishment. For unless Printing be under some such Regulation, and have proper Inspectors, it is conceiv'd, that the Evils now labour'd under, cannot well be remedi'd.